



United States Department of the Interior



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In Reply Refer To:
4700/1792 (NVW01000)

July 30, 2013

Dear Reader:

Field observations and monitoring information has indicated that emergency conditions exist within the Kamma Mountains Herd Management Area (HMA), small portions of the Seven Troughs and Lava Beds HMAs and areas immediately adjacent to these three HMAs (Gather Area). The Gather Area is located in Pershing County, northwest of Lovelock, Nevada, encompasses approximately 110,637 acres and is within the administrative boundaries of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Winnemucca District (WD), Humboldt River Field Office (HRFO) and the Black Rock Field Office (BRFO).

The Gather Area is part of a larger complex of six HMAs referred to as the Blue Wing Complex (BWC) and includes the Kamma Mountains, Seven Troughs, Lava Beds, Blue Wing Mountains, Shawave Mountains and Nightingale Mountains HMAs and consists of approximately 639,300 acres. These six HMAs all occur within the Blue Wing/Seven Troughs Allotment which is approximately 1.4 million acres in size.

The Gather Area has been experiencing severe to exceptional drought for the past two years, as confirmed by BLM's monitoring and by the July 23, 2013 U.S. Drought Monitor report. Wild horses are concentrating near limited available water sources resulting in competition for diminished water supplies, negative impacts to drought-impacted forage, degraded range and declining wild horse health conditions within and outside of the Kamma Mountains, Seven Troughs and Lava Beds HMAs.

BLM's Blue Wing Complex (BWC) Emergency Drought Gather Plan and Monitoring Report shows a reduction in wild horse body condition (Henneke 2 and 3). Concentrations of excess wild horses at limited water sources has resulted in the over-utilization of vegetation around water sources and in large denuded areas that have placed the wild horses at risk of dust pneumonia and other health complications associated with excessive dust. Water sources located within the Gather Area have heavy trailing from each HMA, indicating that wild horses from the three HMAs may be exhausting their only shared water resource. As use of water by wild horses increases, the trailing routes will become powder-like and the likelihood for animals to develop dust pneumonia rises. As the drought conditions continue and the accessible water declines, the

body condition of the wild horses within the Gather Area will continue to deteriorate and a high mortality rate is expected if no action is taken to remove excess wild horses.

The Blue Wing Complex Emergency Drought Gather Plan Decision was signed on July 30, 2013 and effective upon issuance in accordance with 43 CFR § 4110.3-3(b) and 4770.3(c). This decision was based on the Winnemucca District Drought Response Plan Environmental Assessment and its Finding of No Significant Impact (May 30, 2013), the Blue Wing Complex Emergency Drought Gather Plan Determination of National Environmental Policy Act Adequacy (DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2013-0060-DNA) (DNA), professional observations and monitoring information.

The Decision is to conduct an emergency gather in order to remove approximately 200 excess wild horses within the Gather Area. This is a drought response action specifically provided for in the proposed action alternative of the Winnemucca District Drought Response Plan Environmental Assessment. The gather will begin as soon as feasible in early August 2013 and take approximately 10 days to complete.

The gather will be conducted using a helicopter due to limited access where wild horses are watering and due to the flighty nature and high sensitivity of the wild horses within this area to human presence.

The Blue Wing Complex Emergency Drought Gather Plan Decision and DNA, including the Blue Wing Complex (BWC) Emergency Drought Gather Plan and Monitoring Report (including map of the Gather Area) and two Notice of Livestock Agreements for non-use within the Gather Area can be viewed online at http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/wfo/blm_information/nepa0.html. The Winnemucca District Drought Response Plan Environmental Assessment and its Finding of No Significant Impact dated May 30, 2013 is also available for your reference online. Hardcopies of these documents are available upon request from the Winnemucca District Office.

For more information, please consult the Nevada State Office Web page <http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en.html> or contact Mandy DeForest, BLM Winnemucca District Assistant Field Manager, Natural Resources at (775) 623-1579 or adefores@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

\S\ Mandy DeForest for

Derek Messmer
Field Manager
Humboldt River Field Office